

As U.S. creates economic crisis

Global solidarity grows for Bolivarian Venezuela

By Sam Ordóñez

Feb. 10 — For two-and-a-half weeks, Venezuela has seen almost daily demonstrations in which millions of people across the country have reaffirmed their support for the government of Nicolás Maduro. The Venezuelan masses have given a clear message: The Bolivarian Revolution is alive and well, and won't surrender to a U.S. coup.

On Jan. 23 opposition figure Juan Guaidó, head of the National Assembly — that is operating in contempt of the highest court — proclaimed himself president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. His proposed changes for the country are a complete capitulation to U.S. imperialism: privatization of natural resources, neoliberal austerity and generous concessions to foreign capital.

The Trump administration announced that it will send "humanitarian aid." A day later, Guaidó invited the U.S. shipment into Venezuela, stating that aid would enter through Colombia, Brazil and a Caribbean island. Venezuela's legitimate government — the only real government — has repeatedly said it will not allow the U.S. to enter its national territory.

Guaidó's virtual coup government has failed to mobilize more than a few thousand supporters, who are in mostly wealthy neighborhoods. Instead, Guaidó has called on the military to rebel and on the U.S. to invade Venezuela to put his "government" in power. So far, except for a few individuals, the Bolivarian Armed Forces has declared its loyalty to the real government. This is true even though the U.S. has tightened sanctions on individual generals.

In response to the threat of invasion, the Bolivarian government has begun arming the country's community militias.

The fabricated 'humanitarian crisis'

The main pretext that the Trump gang has presented for backing (and in truth directing) the coup government is its claim that there is a humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, which it blames on the government. The most recent threats of military invasion have been justified by the delivery of "humanitarian aid."

The real cause of economic problems is due to the machinations of U.S. imperialism and its cronies.

The collapse of oil prices in 2014, due to a Saudi Arabian decision to flood the global market, had a huge impact on the Venezuelan economy. Oil has been the main national industry since it was discovered in the country, and Venezuela currently sits on the largest certified reserves of crude oil.

In addition to the drop in oil revenues, in 2015 U.S. President Barack Obama enacted economic sanctions on Venezuela, which Trump has since increased. These sanctions cost the Venezuelan economy billions of dollars every year and make it difficult to import certain products, particularly medicines.

Due to the sanctions, currency manipulation and deliberate withholding of imported goods by opposition business owners,

Continued on page 6



National and International Actions

Saturday, February 23

nowaronvenezuela.org

Take action to stop U.S. aggression

By Francis T. Parker
New York

Feb. 14 — Plans for demonstrations to stop U.S. aggression against Venezuela have been gathering support in New York, across North America and throughout the globe. Many of these actions stem from strong feelings among the peoples of the world in solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela and an equally strong desire to stop Yankee imperialism.

One such initiative taking place in the heart of imperialism has been the appeal published on nowaronvenezuela.org (No War on Venezuela) to

Continued on page 7



PHOTO: BRANDAN "BMIKE" ODUMS/ COLORLINES

Mural of activist-athletes Colin Kaepernick and Eric Reid painted as artists protest racism on Super Bowl weekend in Atlanta, pp. 8-9.

Venezuela 6-7, 10

Pres. Maduro's open letter
Solidarity — Texas to Tehran
Internationalism
U.S. gang of seven



8-9

Celebrate, don't appropriate
The 'Kaeper Bowl'
Mumia's radical politics

Subscribe to Workers World

- ☐ 4 weeks trial \$4 ☐ 1 year subscription \$30
☐ Sign me up for the WWP Supporter Program: workers.org/donate

Name _____
Email _____ Phone _____
Street _____
City / State / Zip _____

Workers World Weekly Newspaper
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011

workers.org
212.627.2994

Education workers on the move 4

Wall resisters at the border 5

Editorial: Whose State of the Union? 10

Revolutionary Cuba 3
Mexican strikers 4 **Brexit & workers 11**

Honor Black History Month Support Workers World

Fighting racism in February 2019, Black History Month, means starting at the top of the political ladder and denouncing the openly racist, white supremacist in the White House. It means opposing and exposing his administration’s racist policies, like shutting down the government for 35 days, which put 800,000 government workers, many of whom are African American, in dire financial straits because he demanded \$5.7 billion to build a racist wall on the Mexican border.

Workers World makes a big deal of Black History Month because racism pervades every aspect of life in this country. Everything from fighting for living-wage jobs to ending mass incarceration to having affordable housing and fully funded public schools is rooted in the centuries-long struggle to end this vicious history of racism, rooted in slavery.

That’s why every month, not just Black History Month, the newspaper chronicles the struggles of African Americans to eradicate institutionalized, systemic racism.

Case in point is our continuing coverage of the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. The latest chapter involves calling out the Philadelphia courts for hiding evidence about Abu-Jamal’s case that could lead to a new trial and eventually his freedom.

WW bases our weekly coverage of the Black struggle in the U.S., and in the African diaspora to throw off



Join us in the fight
for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans

people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you.

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

National Office
147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org
Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org
Austin
austin@workers.org
Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
boston@workers.org

Bay Area
P.O. Box 22947
Oakland, CA 94609
bayarea@workers.org
Buffalo, N.Y.
335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org
Charlotte
charlotte@workers.org
Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org
Detroit
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org
Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org
Knoxville, Tenn.
knoxville@workers.org
Minneapolis
minneapolis@workers.org
Pensacola, Fla.
pensacola@workers.org
Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

workers.org/wwp

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org
Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org
San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org
San Diego
sandiego@workers.org
Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org
Washington, D.C.
dc@workers.org
West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

WORKERS WORLD this week

In the U.S.

Take action to stop U.S. aggression	1
Activists demand: Reopen Mumia’s appeal	3
Louisiana abortion case headed to Supreme Court .	3
W. Va. education workers ready to walk out, again .	4
Denver teachers strike	4
At the Rio Grande, resistance to the Wall.	5
Pres. Maduro’s open letter to the U.S. people	6
Austin, Texas: Left activists unite for Venezuela. . . .	6
Portland, Ore.: ‘Hands Off Venezuela PDX’	7
Black History Month: Celebrate, don’t appropriate .	8
Fighting racism with the Kaeper Bowl	8
Mumia Abu-Jamal commentary: Radical politics . .	8
National oppression and the struggle for socialism .	9

Around the world

Global solidarity grows for Bolivarian Venezuela . . .	1
Celebrating revolutionary Cuba’s 60 years	3
Strike victory for Mexican sweatshop workers	4
World Federation of Trade Unions for Venezuela . .	5
Venezuela and revolutionary internationalism	7
Ecuador: ‘Yankee hands off Venezuela’	7
Danes protest U.S. coup attempt	7
U.S. gang of seven.	10
Brexit: Hard exit raises stakes for workers	11
Activists in Spain accused of ‘terrorism’	11

Editorial

Whose State of the Union?	10
-------------------------------------	----

Noticias en Español

Carta abierta al pueblo estadounidense	12
La llamada ‘crisis humanitaria’ en Venezuela	12

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org



Vol. 61, No. 7 • Feb. 14, 2019
Closing date: Feb. 13, 2019

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt;
Web Editors: Ben Carroll, John Steffin

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby,
Jayla Hagans, Sasha Mazumder, Scott Williams

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan,
Sue Davis, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: G. Dunkel, K. Durkin,
Fred Goldstein, Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez,
Berta Joubert-Ceci, Betsey Piette, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci;
Alberto García, Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

Copyright © 2019 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the last week of December by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.

Philadelphia

Former supporters of DA Krasner demand no opposition to Mumia’s reopening his appeal for justice

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Over a dozen community groups and individuals who had campaigned or voted for Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner delivered a letter to his office Feb. 6 expressing a sense of betrayal.

The letter opens: “We, the signatories of this letter, want to communicate to you our strong disapproval, anger and sense of betrayal regarding your decision to contest the ruling of Judge Tucker which reinstated Mumia Abu-Jamal’s rights of appeal. We demand that the district attorney’s office immediately drop its appeal of the ruling.”

The signers “applaud the positive changes” Krasner has made. However, the letter goes on to say, “You told us that investigating and righting past legal wrongs was your priority. You strongly disavowed racism. Many of us canvassed and knocked on doors for you, held fundraisers and built grassroots support for your campaign. Now, many of us feel betrayed.”

After describing some of the unjust practices during Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial, the document argues, “By pursuing this appeal — even though you were not the originator of this past injustice — you are legitimizing it, saying it is acceptable. We think it is not.”

Judge Leon Tucker ruled Dec. 27, 2018, that according to the Pennsylvania Rules of Judicial Conduct, former PA Supreme Court Judge Ronald Castille was biased and should have recused himself from hearing Abu-Jamal’s appeals. Tucker’s ruling granted relief to Mumia by giving him the right to reopen his appeals.

But Krasner filed an appeal of Tucker’s ruling Jan. 25, in effect defending decades of prosecutorial misconduct by previous DAs. He said, “That opinion has sweeping and, in our view, problematic implications for a large volume of cases, in addition to its effect on the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal.” (bit.ly/2HGjyJ1)

So the politician who claimed to be against mass incarceration and who promoted reviewing past convictions and freeing the wrongfully convicted now opposes a court decision because too many imprisoned men and women might benefit — because that is too much justice!

Among those who delivered the letter to DA Krasner’s office on Feb. 6 were Cindy Miller (Food Not Bombs-Solidarity), Wayne Cook (Mumia Abu-Jamal’s nephew), Linda Ragin (Community and Labor Outreach Committee of Mobilization4Mumia), Pam Africa (International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal) and Joe Piette (International Action Center).



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

(L to R) Cindy Miller, Wayne Cook, Linda Ragin, Pam Africa present letter of outrage to Philadelphia DA Krasner, demanding justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Of the Philadelphia organizations and individuals who signed the letter to Krasner were Decarcerate PA, Human Rights Coalition, Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration (CADBI), Books Through Bars, Dr. George Ciccariello-Maher (Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics) and Dr. Sandra Joy, professor of sociology, Rowan University, Ph.D, LCSW.

An online version of the letter has been made into a petition. You can add your name at tinyurl.com/yy5vywrx. □

Louisiana abortion case is headed to Supreme Court

By Sue Davis

The Supreme Court ruled Feb. 7 to stop an anti-abortion law, passed in Louisiana in 2014, from going into effect. News reports made a big deal about the fact that Chief Justice John Roberts chose to vote with the four justices who support abortion rights, yielding a 5-4 decision in favor of the stay. However, as Rewire.News pointed out Feb. 8, this was merely a procedural vote to ensure the law would return to the Supreme Court for a final decision in 2020.

The Louisiana law is a near-exact replica of a Texas law the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional in 2016. That law would have forced doctors who perform abortions to have “active admitting privileges” at a hospital within 30 miles of the clinic where they provide abortions. The court held then that the requirement did not protect the health of pregnant women, as the state of Texas asserted, but would impose an “undue burden” on women who choose to obtain an abortion.

In line with the 2016 ruling, a federal trial court agreed that the Louisiana law was unconstitutional. But last fall the notoriously reactionary U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit reversed the ruling so the law could go into effect for the first time in Louisiana.

The Center for Reproductive Rights then filed an appeal to the Supreme Court on behalf of Louisiana abortion providers requesting a stay to keep the law from going into effect until the providers could file a petition for review.

Roberts’ vote was not to affirm abortion rights, according to Rewire, but was a hands-off message to the lower court not to short-circuit the Supreme Court’s power. All the SCOTUS vote did was maintain the status quo. If any court is going to overturn the 2016 ruling, it will be the “Roberts’ Court” — after oral arguments and deliberation.

But newbie Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who swore up, down and around town he would never undercut abortion rights during Senate hearings last fall, willfully opted to write a dissent to the ruling that revealed his true anti-abortion position.

Kavanaugh asserted that the only way to prove whether the admitting-privileges requirement would impose an undue burden was to let the law go into effect and see what happened. He opined that if the doctors could not obtain such privileges, they could then return to court, but if they did not, it proved the law would not impose an undue burden.

But Kavanaugh failed to take into account the serious consequences for pregnant women, since implementing the law would mean only one doctor in the state of Louisiana would be allowed to perform abortions. As the plaintiffs pointed out in their brief: “Some women could be completely denied the choice to terminate a pregnancy and forced to carry the pregnancy to term.” (scotusblog.com, Feb. 7)

The ruling ultimately shows Roberts is not a born-again pro-choice hero, but a strict defender of the



Supreme Court’s prestige and power, which was surely sullied by Kavanaugh’s history of attempted rape of a teenage girl.

Kavanaugh’s dissent revealed, yet again, that he is truly heartless and cruel about women’s health and well-being. The thousands of women who protested against his nomination understood this in their bones.

Kavanaugh will clearly follow Trump’s marching orders to overturn legal abortion, but that will not stop millions of women, gender-oppressed people and men from marching to uphold the right to legal, safe, accessible abortion, as they did in the 1970s, which effectively prompted the Supreme Court to legalize abortion. And as recently as Jan. 19 at the third Women’s March, people demonstrated yet again their determination to defend women’s reproductive rights and fight for reproductive justice. □

Celebrating revolutionary Cuba

By Nathaniel Peters
New York

A crowd packed the People’s Forum in midtown Manhattan Feb. 8 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and to honor outgoing Cuban ambassador to the U.N., Anayansi Rodriguez Camejo.

The featured speaker for the evening, Ambassador Rodriguez has spent the past two years defending Cuban sovereignty at the U.N. against the aggression of U.S. imperialism. She will now return to Cuba to assume the post of Deputy Foreign Minister.

Ambassador Rodriguez spoke about the example of Fidel Castro’s “permanent revolutionary intransigence and faith in victory.” She raised the importance of solidarity not only with Cuba, but with Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Palestine. She ended her remarks: “Long live our socialist and democratic revolution. Of the humble, by the humble and for the humble! Socialismo o muerte! Venceremos! Patria o muerte! Venceremos!”

Following the Ambassador’s remarks, event organizers paid tribute to recently deceased Black Revolutionary Nehanda Abiodun. Born in Harlem and active in Black Liberation struggles in 1970s and 1980s, Abiodun lived in Havana for over 30 years. She sought political asylum in Cuba after being pursued by the FBI for alleged involvement in freeing Assata Shakur from prison and other revolutionary activity. An organizer with the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Abiodun was known as the “Godmother” of Cuban hip-hop.

The event also featured speakers from three upcoming brigades to Cuba, which will provide opportunities for people from the U.S. to travel to Cuba and witness the Cuban Revolution for themselves.

The 24th International May Day brigade will travel to Cuba from April 23 to May 5. More information is at nnoc.info/mayday-brigade-call.

The IFCO/Pastors for Peace caravan will travel to Cuba in June. More information can be found at ifconews.org.

The 50th Annual Venceremos Brigade will travel



WW PHOTO: NATHANIEL PETERS

Cuba’s ambassador to the U.N., Anayansi Rodriguez Camejo, speaks in New York City at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of her country’s revolution.

to Cuba on July 21 and return in separate groups on Aug. 2, 6 and 13, providing brigadistas with options to choose trips of different lengths. See more information at vb4cuba.com. □

For the first time in 25 years, Denver teachers strike

By Viviana Weinstein
Denver

Feb. 11 — Two weeks ago, Denver teachers, through their union, the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA), voted 93 percent in favor of striking against the city’s public school administration, Denver Public Schools. This first strike vote by teachers in 25 years showed they have reached a breaking point.

The teachers’ demands include an across-the-board increase in salary and starting pay instead of intermittent bonuses. This would affect classroom teachers, school nurses and psychologists. They are also asking for increased pay for professional development points when they complete special courses. They questioned the need for costly and bloated DPS administrative staff, which carries the highest ratio of administrators to teachers of any city in Colorado.

The teachers emphasize they are at a breaking point financially and emotionally. Most work 60 hours a week, and many have had to take second jobs just to survive. Many cannot afford to live in expensive Denver where they teach and have had to leave the district to obtain

higher salaries in surrounding areas. The bonus system is unpredictable. The DPS administration uses bonuses to recruit teachers on a one-time basis for underfunded schools with at-risk students rather than increasing support and funding for these schools. This practice does not help retain teachers, who end up leaving because of lack of libraries and other necessary resources.

Students support teachers’ strike

Students from Denver East High School have supported the striking teachers by sending letters to state agencies, sitting in on bargaining sessions and actually producing a video challenging administrative excess. The students asked why there are 38 “executive managers” in DPS, each making over \$136,000 a year while teachers earn a fraction of that, and noted many teachers have not had a raise in 10 years.

The Denver Post reported Feb. 8 that the superintendent of schools, Susana Cordova, sent letters to parents saying the schools would remain open except for the early childhood development program, which would affect 4,700 students.

Cordova announced plans to use 1,200 regular substitute teachers, plus another

300 newly hired substitute teachers at double pay. She also plans to use 1,400 employees who work in the DPS central administrative office. This will cost over \$400,000 a day for substitute teachers and curriculum.

Cordova threatened administrative employees with firing if any should refuse to cross the picket line.

When negotiations between the union and the administration broke down Feb. 9 after many hours, the teachers announced they would walk out Feb. 11. DCTA President Henry Roman said, “We will strike for our students and for our profession.”

The strike will affect 5,300 teachers and 71,000 students in the Denver Public School system.

On the morning of Feb. 11, before 7 a.m., 2,100 teachers had called in sick, according to local Channel 7 news. Picket lines were forming around most schools in Denver.

Lead negotiator for the DCTA Rob Gould stated in an early morning interview, “The [Denver Public Schools] need our minds, our labor and our talent. The base salary



WW PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

Feb. 11: 7 a.m., 14 degrees, and 500 striking teachers on the picket line at Denver East High School.

for a Denver teacher is \$7,000 to \$15,000 less than in surrounding districts. Teachers cannot afford to live where they teach and 20 percent leave every year.”

More than one teacher on the picket line said the strike was for survival. Students heading into class were asked if students overall supported the teachers; they responded, “I sure hope so!”

A local Fox News video from about 10 a.m. showed students inside Denver East High School cheering and dancing in the hallways to celebrate their teachers picketing outside. The video then showed the students walking out in support of their teachers. □

W.Va. education workers ready to walk out, again

By Workers World West Virginia bureau

Education workers in West Virginia are again in motion for their students and their jobs. In 2018 in all 55 counties in the state they held a historic nine-day walk-out, defying state prohibitions on public sector worker organizing.

When the legislative session began in January, ultra-right state Senate Republicans introduced an “omnibus bill” on education, SB 451, in reprisal for last year’s work stoppage. The bill tied a 5 percent pay raise and \$150 million funding for health insurance to union-busting legislation that the 2018 strike had defeated.

The bill included reactionary measures: charter schools; vouchers using public school funds for charter schools, private schools, virtual schools and homeschooling; removal of seniority; and elimination of collecting union dues through payroll deduction. It added a section that increased class size and docked pay for anyone participating in future walkouts. The Republican majority-led House of Delegates is now discussing the bill.

Education workers across the state carried out a statewide walk-in and various informational pickets on Jan. 9. These actions forced the House to concede the point on payroll dues deduction, agree

to a “compromise” by changing the language on seniority, and limit the number of charter schools to two “pilot” programs in Charleston and Huntington, the state’s biggest cities. Currently, no charter schools operate there.

On Jan. 11, the speaker of the House, Roger Hanshaw, called for a public hearing on the omnibus bill at 8:00 a.m. Many suspect that Hanshaw, a corporate attorney for the fracking and coal industries, chose the time to keep school workers out. Then evangelical proponents of homeschooling and paid lobbyists for the union-busting American Legislative Exchange Council could dominate the narrative.

African-American delegate Sean Hornbuckle’s motion for an additional hearing at 5:30 p.m. carried, so teachers and support staff could present their oral arguments against the bill. School workers attended and spoke out at both hearings.

The bill now returns to the Senate, where the reactionary clauses could be introduced again.

Unions taking action

In response to these legislative maneuvers, teachers and school service workers here voted to go on a statewide strike if necessary.

State union officials had asked members of the West Virginia Education Association, American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia and West Virginia School Service Personnel Association for an “authorization vote” for an unspecified work action, as they did before last year’s walkout.

More than 150 local leaders of all three unions met Feb. 9 to tally the results, which were nearly 90 percent “yes.”

Work actions closed schools in all 55 counties in 2018 because superintendents willingly cooperated in cancelling schools. Picketers did not lose pay or benefits. Most school administration and elected board members claimed they supported their faculty and staff.

This year, while most county boards of education have declared solidarity by signing resolutions, some are threatening an injunction if the unions call for action. Some board members have publicly supported the reactionary bill, contradicting their position as public education “representatives.”

While almost all county superintendents oppose the bill, especially the section on charter schools, a few are exposing their role as bosses by openly denouncing any potential walkout.

The capitalist media have also tried to



At a Feb. 3 rally by W. Va. education workers, a sign refers to their 1990 strike, which had demands similar to those today, including health insurance, wages, and student needs.

divide the public from school employees by painting the latter as “greedy” and by lying about how privatization destroys public schools.

Education workers and supporters are hoping the bill will eventually die. At the same time, union militants know most legislators serve the racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ, exploiting ruling class. Some individuals most enthusiastic about the bill wear fascistic MAGA hats and use derogatory language about oppressed communities on the chamber floor.

Only one thing is certain: The teachers and service workers are willing to walk again if legislators fail to kill their reactionary bill. □

Strike victory for Mexican sweatshop workers

By Martha Grevatt

On Jan. 12, some 40,000 Mexican workers went on strike at 45 sweatshops — known as maquiladoras — across the U.S. border in the town of Matamoros.

The demand was “20 and 32”—a 20 percent raise and a 32,000 peso (about \$1,700) bonus. As of this writing, most of the factory owners have ceded to the workers’ demands. The bosses reportedly suffered combined losses of \$50 million a day.

The strike was sparked when Mexican President López Obrador ordered the minimum wage along the border to be doubled. While the Matamoros factory workers already made twice the minimum wage, many have contract language calling for wage increases when the

minimum wage goes up. When their pay rate didn’t change, they struck.

Matamoros workers won contract language on pay after a 1993 strike. Despite the super-exploitive pay rates imposed on maquiladora workers, many factory owners have relocated to other parts of Mexico where wages are even lower and workers are “represented” by phony “ghost unions.” There are 48 sweatshops in Matamoros, but there were many more before the 1993 strike.

The 45 affected enterprises make a range of products from televisions to cosmetics, and Matamoros is also a center for auto parts manufacturing. Struck plants included Kongsberg Interior Systems, a maker of electric cables used in vehicles. The strike could have shut down auto

assembly plants in the U.S. if it had continued much longer. Significantly, the parts plants were the first to settle.

A 20 percent raise in Matamoros, where \$1 an hour is a typical wage, is about 20 cents an hour. The low wages of workers in Mexico and the global South mean that auto companies can get component parts on the cheap and increase their bottom line. The combined profits of Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles were \$26 billion in 2018.

The bosses will use every trick they can come up with to keep labor costs down — from paying lower wages to a



PHOTO: TELESUR

Mass meeting of workers in January at the Matamoros plaza.

third tier of “temporary” workers in the U.S. to outsourcing parts production to low-wage countries like Mexico.

Cross-border worker solidarity is the only answer to the bosses’ bloodthirsty demands for ever-higher profits. □

At the Rio Grande, resistance to the Wall

By Teresa Gutierrez

The Mexico/U.S. border in south Texas is the most militarized region in the United States. Nonetheless, the people of the region are fighting back against the hated “Wall” proposed by the even more hated Donald Trump.

There are layers and layers of repressive apparatus in this region. Called the “Valley” by Texans — referring to the Rio Grande Valley — cops, sheriffs, Customs and Border Patrol, National Guard as well as military troops are part of the armed Valley occupation.

The American Civil Liberties Union stated in testimony before the Inter-American Commission on Dec. 6: “[T]he U.S. government (has) increased attacks on immigrants and communities of color through the militarization of domestic law enforcement agencies and the use of the military. Nowhere is the United States militarization more pronounced than on its southern border with Mexico and throughout border communities.” (tinyurl.com/y4b5k900)

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights writes on its website: “[B]order militarization ... [is] transforming the area from a transnational frontier to a zone of permanent vigilance, enforcement, and violence. The border has become an imagined war zone ... where the U.S. constitution has little to no value.” (tinyurl.com/y6nb24or)

The ACLU agrees: “Customs and Border Patrol officials regularly act like the Constitution does not apply, operating lawlessly and frequently disregarding the Fourth Amendment’s protection against unreasonable searches and seizures in its ‘100-mile border zone’ ” (tinyurl.com/gqs54lj)

NNIR summarizes: “[F]unding for border enforcement surpasses the funding of all other law-enforcement agencies (FBI, DEA, ATF, Secret Service and U.S. Marshals Service). The American Immigration Council estimates that \$263 billion have been spent on immigration enforcement since 1986.”

Yet Trump today is demanding \$5.7 billion more for “The Wall.” He even held government workers hostage for that money when he shut down the government and furloughed them without pay or made them work for no pay a few weeks ago.

Where there is occupation, there is resistance

All this money and military occupation have not stopped the people of the Valley from organizing. Despite living in a region where the state and its enforcers declare there are no constitutional rights, the Valley is resisting.

Heroic Indigenous activists of the Standing Rock protests, as well as members of the Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe of Texas, have set up camp at the Eli Jackson Cemetery to protest “The Wall.” According to the Feb. 8 Texas Observer, the activists have “vowed to stand their ground in the face of the president’s bulldozers.”

The Eli Jackson Cemetery was founded in 1865 on a ranch established in 1857 by Nathaniel Jackson after he came from Alabama with his family and eleven freedmen. Jackson was white and a former slave owner. But he appeared to have a change of heart when he married a Black woman. (tinyurl.com/yy5wm8o5)

Upon arrival in south Texas his family garnered a reputation of helping the community and had one of the few cemeteries that buried Black, Brown and white

people. The remains of 150 people lie in the cemetery, of many nationalities but primarily Native and Black people. There are also several unmarked graves, likely to be of poor people and people of color.

ominous actions. The Texas Civil Rights Project is reaching out to the community to inform them that they are not at all required to let the government have access to their lands.

the Mexico/U.S. border against eminent domain that go back to the George W. Bush administration.

University of Pittsburgh professor Gerald S. Dickinson, who studies land use and constitutional law, warns that seizing land Trump wants to build “The Wall” on would be very different than the land seizures that happened under Bush. The Trump wall could mean a massive land seizure of private property exactly like the land Alvarez has had in her family for five generations. (The Atlantic, Jan. 8)

‘NO WALL’

Alvarez has never been an activist, but she has now joined the No Wall Coalition. She bravely refused to sign over access to her property and boldly painted “NO BORDER WALL” on her roof for drones and border helicopters to see. Alvarez is getting ready for a legal battle amidst the trials and tribulation of daily life. The Texas Observer points out that even if homes are saved, the “wall could still make the property unlivable.”

The Army Corps has sent multiple letters to the Alvarez family. They warned that the government would take the family to court within 90 days because the family has refused them permission.

“I think they assume we’re ignorant. They’re threatening. They say, ‘You sign, or we’ll take it away,’” Alvarez said. “This is my house.”

Mancias told the Texas Observer: “We’re ready to protect the environment and our rights as the original people of this land. What are they gonna do? Run us over?”

For Alvarez and Mancias to stand up in the midst of the militarized border is an inspiration to all. It shows that the struggle for migrant, environmental and worker rights marches on.

As someone from the enemy camp once said — a former director of Homeland Security — “Show me a fifty-foot wall, and I’ll show you a fifty-one-foot ladder.” (tinyurl.com/yy8yeycs)

Indeed, nothing can stop the resistance.

For more about border struggles, visit facebook.com/rgvnoborderwall/. □



Top: Nayda Alvarez. Bottom: Activists resist the Wall at the Jackson Cemetery in the Valley.

A few feet north of the cemetery, the Trump administration plans to turn a river levee into a 30-foot concrete and steel wall, including a clearing for a 150-foot enforcement zone. The community fears that bodies from the cemetery will be exhumed and most of the cemetery razed, so they have set up tents to protect the area. Environmentalists have also joined Indigenous people at the cemetery as “The Wall” will have dire environmental consequences for the area.

Juan Mancias, one of the encampment leaders, stated in the Texas Observer interview that the encampment is called Yalui Village. Mancias is the chair of the Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe, and “yalui” means butterfly in their language. The butterfly, especially the monarch that migrates into and out of Mexico, has become symbolic of the right to migrate and of the need to protect the world’s environments.

The Wall will uproot graves, homes, everything

Nayda Alvarez lives about 360 feet from the Rio Grande in an unincorporated community called La Rosita. She is a teacher and has lived in her home since the second grade. Her house is on property that’s been in her family for at least five generations, which she inherited from her grandfather. (Texas Observer, Feb. 5)

According to local news reports, dozens of landowners in the Rio Grande Valley have received letters from the Army Corps of Engineers asserting that the government wants to access homeowners’ properties to survey, test soil and other

These can be the first steps in the federal government getting ready to grab private property with the dreaded eminent domain, which gives the state the right to seize property for public use. There are unresolved court battles along

World Federation of Trade Unions: ‘Repel the plans of the imperialists, long live internationalist solidarity!’

This statement was issued Jan. 25 by the Secretariat of the WFTU.

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), representing 95 million workers of the five continents as well as the world class-oriented labor movement, strongly rejects the attempted coup d’état against the legitimate government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

This interference, orchestrated by the U.S. government, NATO and the EU, and executed by the representatives of the transnationals and monopolies in the country, constitutes a flagrant violation of the most elementary rules of international law and of the Venezuela’s sovereignty. For the WFTU, it is an inalienable right of each people to decide for themselves, without outside interventions, on their present and future.

At the same time, the WFTU reaffirms, as it has already done on several occasions, its solidarity with the Venezuelan people, with the working class and our affiliated organizations in the country



[against] this imperialist threat. In addition, we call on the Venezuelan people to reject the maneuvers of the imperialists and their lackeys in the region, to condemn the plans of the murderers of the peoples. We will continue to support the Venezuelan working class, for the deepening of the Bolivarian process, until the abolition of man-by-man exploitation, towards a new world, without wars and imperialist barbarism. This is the only way forward to repel the plans of the imperialists.

Long live internationalist solidarity! □

Global solidarity grows for Bolivarian Venezuela

Continued from page 1

Venezuela has been under attack for years as Washington and the Venezuelan oligarchy wage war on its economy.

The Trump gang’s claims of humanitarian crisis deliberately ignore the social programs that the Bolivarian government has maintained throughout the economic attacks. For example, there are more than 32,000 Local Production and Supply Committees (CLAP in Spanish), which provide such staple foods as rice, lentils, beans, oil, tuna, corn flour, sugar and milk. These foods are sold at subsidized prices, and 11,000 of the CLAPs have begun providing various hygienic products.



Members of Kenya’s social movements raise their fists in solidarity with President Nicolás Maduro and Bolivarian Venezuela, Jan. 10.

Besides the CLAPs and various agricultural projects, the Bolivarian process over the past 20 years has eradicated illiteracy, opened hundreds of universities and built 2.5 million subsidized homes since 2011. Real hardships exist, but it is precisely the Bolivarian government’s actions that have prevented a humanitarian crisis.

For an example of a real humanitarian crisis, consider that this Feb. 27 will be the 30th anniversary of the “Caracazo,” the mass uprising in Caracas sparked by the lack of food and the announcement of neoliberal reforms. It was a real coup that protested government repression of the masses at that time. And it is what launched military officer Hugo Chávez as a political leader and began the political struggle now being carried out by the Bolivarian Revolution.

Global solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution

In the weeks since the start of the U.S.-orchestrated coup, there have been hundreds of demonstrations across the

world in solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution. Almost immediately after Guaidó’s self-inauguration, protesters converged on the White House demanding that Washington stop interfering in the country.

Within days, cities such as New York, Miami, Philadelphia, Boston, Houston, San Francisco, Denver, Seattle and Vancouver held emergency demonstrations. A steady flow of solidarity demonstrations have been held throughout the United States and in other parts of the world, with actions planned in cities for Feb. 23 and marches in Washington, D.C., on March 16 and 30.

In Canada, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the largest union in the country, issued a statement in support of President Maduro. The Canadian Labor Congress, of which CUPE is a member, also issued a statement against intervention and in favor of dialogue.

Demonstrations have also been held in Europe, particularly in Spanish cities such as Madrid. On Feb. 10, some Yellow Vest protesters in France carried Venezuelan flags or expressed solidarity with Venezuela at the embassy in Paris. Global rallies have ranged from from Denmark to Iran to India. (tinyurl.com/y4k88f82)

The governments of Russia, China, Cuba, Bolivia, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa, India, Italy, New Zealand and most African governments have all continued to recognize Maduro as president. Furthermore, both the U.N. Security Council and the Organization of American States refused to recognize the coup government, despite the U.S. and its allies raising resolutions before them. □

Austin, Texas

Left activists unite to support Bolivarian Venezuela

By Workers World Austin bureau

On Feb. 2, a staunch coalition of activists in Austin demonstrated their support for the Venezuelan people and the Bolivarian Revolution against the U.S.-backed right-wing coup now being attempted there.

Members of the Austin branch of Workers World Party were joined in solidarity with activists from the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Democratic Socialists of America, Communist Party USA, Austin Anti-War Coalition, EcoSocialists and several independents.

The demonstration, lasting roughly two hours, received many excited honks of support from the working-class people of southeast Austin who were out running errands before the next day’s Super

Bowl festivities.

Many pedestrians also stopped to ask questions about the demonstration and current situation in Venezuela, with several inquiring about how they could become involved. Flyers with WWP’s statement about the coup were given out to nearly 100 people, who asked for additional information while waiting for traffic lights to change.

After the demonstration, several organizers expressed optimism about the future of the working-class movement in Austin and the domestic struggle against U.S. imperialism. Plans for follow-up events in Austin, in order to bring more light on the situation in Venezuela and U.S. terror in Latin America, are well underway. □

No war on

An open letter to the people of the U.S. from President Nicolás Maduro

President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela delivered this Feb. 7 message to the people of the U.S. through social media.



If I know anything, it is about the people, because just like you, I am a man of the people. I was born and raised in a poor neighborhood of Caracas. I was forged in the heat of popular and union struggles in a Venezuela submerged in exclusion and inequality. I am no tycoon; I am a worker of mind and heart. Today I have the great privilege of presiding over the new Venezuela, rooted in a model of inclusive development and social equality, which Comandante Hugo Chávez forged starting in 1998, inspired by the legacy of Simón Bolívar.

We are living today in a historical crossroad. There are days that will define the future of our countries, giving us a choice between war and peace. Your national representatives of Washington want to bring to their borders the same hatred that they sowed in Vietnam. They want to invade and intervene in Venezuela — they say, as they said then — in the name of democracy and freedom. But this is false. Their history of the usurpation of power in Venezuela is as false as the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. It is a false argument, but it can have dramatic consequences for our entire region.

Venezuela is a country that, by virtue of its 1999 Constitution, has broadly expanded the participatory and protagonist democracy of the people, and that in an unprecedented way so that today Venezuela is one of the countries that has held the largest number of elections in the last 20 years. You may not like our ideology or how our society looks, but we exist and we are millions.

I address these words to the people of the United States of America to warn of the gravity and danger that some sectors in the White House intend, that is, to invade Venezuela with unpredictable consequences for my country and for the entire American region. President Donald Trump also intends to disrupt the worthy initiatives to open a dialogue promoted by Uruguay and Mexico, with the support of CARICOM, for a peaceful solution and dialogue on behalf of Venezuela. We know that for the good of Venezuela we have to sit down and talk because to refuse to dialogue is to choose the path of force. Keep in mind the words of John F. Kennedy: "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate." Those who do not want to dialogue, are they afraid of the truth?

The political intolerance toward the

Venezuelan Bolivarian model and the desires for our immense oil resources, minerals and other great riches have prompted an international coalition headed by the U.S. government to commit the serious insanity of waging a military attack on Venezuela under the pretext of a nonexistent humanitarian crisis.

The people of Venezuela have painfully suffered social wounds caused by a criminal commercial and financial blockade, which has been aggravated by the dispossession and robbery of our financial resources and assets in countries aligned with this demented onslaught.

And yet, thanks to a new system of social protection, of direct attention to the most vulnerable sectors of our society, we proudly continue to be a country in the Americas with high human development index and low inequality.

The U.S. people must know that this complex multiform aggression is carried out with total impunity and in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations, which expressly outlaws the threat or use of force, among other principles and purposes, for the sake of peace and friendly relations between nations.

We want to continue being business partners of the people of the United States, as we have been throughout our history. Their politicians in Washington, on the other hand, are willing to send their sons and daughters to die in an absurd war, instead of respecting the sacred right of the Venezuelan people to self-determination and to safeguard their sovereignty.

Like you, people of the United States, we Venezuelans are patriots. And we shall defend our homeland with all our soul. Today Venezuela is united in a single cry: We demand the cessation of the aggression that seeks to suffocate our economy and socially suffocate our people, as well as the cessation of the serious and dangerous threats of military intervention against Venezuela.

We appeal to the good soul of U.S. society, a victim of its own leaders, to join our call for peace. Let us be all one people against warmongering and war.

Long live the peoples of America!

Nicolás Maduro
President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Venezuela!

Venezuela and revolutionary internationalism

This is an edited transcript of remarks by Workers World Party First Secretary Larry Holmes at a “Build Global Solidarity With Venezuela” forum Jan. 31 in New York City.

I want to say a little bit about Venezuela in the historical context of the struggle for revolutionary internationalism. We believe that it is a necessary and current discussion not just because of the U.S. attack on Venezuela but because of the entire global situation.

Ten years ago Hugo Chávez and those closest to him tried to organize a meeting they hoped might usher in a fifth socialist international. They called this in Caracas in late 2009, with representatives from 30 countries and 50 parties, most of those probably from Latin America, but with representation from around the world.

The maximum goal of an international was not achieved for complex reasons, but it was a hell of an achievement for



WW PHOTO: SUE HARRIS

Larry Holmes.

Chávez. The meeting was called on the heels of the 2008 crash of the financial markets — that near-death experience for capitalism — and highlighted both the fact that the system was going downhill and the need to ramp up the struggle against capitalism.

Chávez was one of the very few leaders who had the credibility and the stature to make such a call. And it was the first time a serious call for building a socialist

Continued on page 9

‘Hands Off Venezuela PDX’

By Joshua Hanks
Portland, Ore.

On the cold, rainy evening of Feb. 8, a new coalition, “Hands Off Venezuela PDX,” gathered in Portland’s Terry Schrunk Plaza between City Hall and the Green-Wyatt Federal Building. Activists came from several groups, including Veterans for Peace, the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee, Portland Jobs With Justice, Democratic Socialists of America, the International League of People’s Struggles and the Portland branch of Workers World Party.

The snap coalition was formed in a week by local activists to get this initial demonstration supporting Bolivarian Venezuela into the streets. More actions are planned for the future, with regular meetings to steer the local anti-war and anti-imperialist response to the ongoing U.S. coup attempt against Venezuela.

Speakers highlighted the absurdity of coup leader Juan Guaidó’s claim to the Venezuelan presidency, with Western countries’ approval of the attempted coup representing a serious violation of international noninterference and Venezuelan sovereignty.

A member of Veterans for Peace made comparisons to U.S. hostilities in the 1980s when Elliot Abrams, recently appointed as Trump’s “Special Envoy for Venezuela,” was a key Reagan administration official involved in illegally funding right-wing death squads in Nicaragua.

The author of this article also spoke, calling for a united anti-war coalition of all progressive movements, and emphasizing the many gains in Venezuela that stand to be wiped out if the U.S. coup is successful. The Bolivarian government uses the money from its own natural resources to benefit its people—by building millions of units of free public housing, expanding food and medical access in poor areas, restoring Indigenous land titles, implementing reforestation efforts and sustainable agriculture, and supporting local artists and musicians in working-class communities.

Several speakers raised that Venezuela sits on the world’s largest oil reserves and that U.S. officials, most notably National

Security Advisor John Bolton and Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, have been clear that control of oil is a key goal of U.S. intervention in Venezuela.

But the U.S. wants the money from Venezuela’s oil to go into the pockets and portfolios of huge U.S. energy companies like Valero and Chevron, so Washington is backing a criminal coup to make that happen.

After the speeches, demonstrators chanted anti-imperialist slogans and momentarily blocked traffic as they marched to the Federal Building, where they taped dozens of coalition statements to the doors.

The statement read, in part, “The current economic sanctions do not help [...] they are designed to inflict pain in the hope that it will lead to the overthrow of the government” and “We firmly assert the future of Venezuela is a matter for Venezuelans [...] no sanctions, no coup, no military intervention. Hands off Venezuela!”

The beginnings of a Portland anti-war movement have quickly formed in response to U.S. imperialism, and are loudly declaring their opposition.

The coalition now turns to organizing a demonstration on Feb. 23, the one-month anniversary of the attempted U.S. coup.

Nationwide demonstrations have been called for that day to denounce U.S. war and aggression against Venezuela, a country that represents the international struggle toward socialism. □



WW PHOTOS: JOSHUA HANKS

A “Hands Off Venezuela PDX” coalition marched on Feb. 8, ending by covering doors of the Federal Building with their demands.

Take action to stop U.S. aggression

Continued from page 1

hold coordinated demonstrations in various cities on Feb. 23.

In discussions with some of the organizers of this action, Workers World learned that this international campaign in support of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is growing stronger daily. To date, over 150 organizations and more than 2,000 endorsers have signed the statement in solidarity with Maduro and the Venezuelan people. The nowaron-venezuela.org website is getting thousands of hits a day. (To aid local organizers, the website has information on Venezuela, graphics and a toolkit of resources for organizers to use.)

The organizers plans to continue pushing the mobilization with new daily contacts. As of today, groups in 25 North American cities are already planning actions. The organizers expect this momentum to continue and to spread to other countries. Already protests have been called in London; Moscow; Rome and Turin, Italy; Dhaka, Bangladesh; and Valletta, Malta.

One thing organizers feel good about is that people around the world have translated the original English and Spanish statements into Portuguese, German, Russian, Chinese, Farsi, French, Italian, Greek, Serbo-Croatian, Tagalog,

Haitian-Creyol and Bengali. A Romanian translation is expected soon. That the statement has been produced in so many languages has been useful for distributions in communities in the U.S. where that language is spoken. It has also brought in support and solidarity from around the world.

Signers from abroad come from Venezuela, Brazil, Greece, Italy, Britain, India, Iran, Switzerland, Romania, Afghanistan, Ireland and South Africa, with the list growing. Signers in the United States include such political and anti-war activists as Ajamu Baraka, Cindy Sheehan, Roger Waters, Pam Africa and William Camacaro of the Bolivarian Circle.

Organizers have used social media to reach out to a mass audience, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They ask readers to “follow” the messages and help get the message out. The more people who hear about this online, they say, the more people will show up in the streets. To post online use hashtags #23feb and #handsoffvenezuela.

One signer, Julio, from Venezuela, explained his reasons: “My country is a country of peace, we just want respect, we choose our own leaders. Trump, stop now with your predatory imperialist politics. Our only crime is wanting to be independent and a sovereign country. Yankee go home!”



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

On Feb. 9, a large, enthusiastic and dedicated crowd of activists gathered in New York to plan that city’s Feb. 23 march on Wall Street to protest U.S. threats and actions against Venezuela.

Danes protest U.S. coup attempt

More than 20 parties and organizations assembled 200 people in front of the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Feb. 2 to protest the U.S. attempted coup in Venezuela. In a statement, the Danish Communist Party asked “all democratic, trade-union and popular forces to — with all energy — put pressure on Danish

politicians and the government ... to express support for Venezuela’s right to peace, non-interference and self-determination.” □



Ecuador: ‘Yankee hands off Venezuela’

By Michael Otto
Ibarra, Ecuador

On the morning of Feb. 8, the Ecuadorian Committee in Solidarity with the Peoples and Their Community Organizations demonstrated peacefully in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Thirty-two Ecuadorian social organizations signed a letter of solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela. The letter had been delivered the previous day by the committee to Ecuadorian Foreign Minister José Valencia. It was read aloud in the presence of a crowd of people carrying Venezuelan flags and placards with the image of Simón Bolívar, the iconic liberator of South American countries from Spanish colonialism.

The letter made it clear that the current President Lenin “Moreno does not represent the people of Ecuador” in his support of the current U.S. campaign against the Bolivarian nation of Venezuela. Illegal actions taken by the Moreno government against Venezuela were rejected and denounced: “Yankee hands off Venezuela.” “We oppose U.S. intervention in the affairs of the peoples of the world,” shouted protesters. □



PHOTO: KINDEROJO

WW Commentary

Black History Month: Celebration, not appropriation

By Dolores Cox

Black History Month began as a weeklong celebration, proposed by Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) in 1926 to honor, in his words, the contributions, achievements and vibrant history of Negroes in the U.S. and the world. He believed Black people needed to demonstrate that they had a past, present and future.

Woodson, an author, historian and early scholar studying African-American history, wrote “The Mis-Education of the Negro.” He was also known as “the father of Black history.” Woodson chose the month of February because of the birth dates of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

The observance of Black history evolved from a week into Black History Month. This came about as a result of African Americans continuing to organize and struggle for racial justice and equality. Black people had been celebrating Black historical accomplishments and wanted official recognition.

Under sustained pressure, fifty years later in 1976, at the height of the Black Power Movement, President Gerald Ford made Black History Month official, coincidentally or not, during the 200th anniversary of the American Revolutionary War.

Government recognition of Black History Month also served the interests of the capitalist ruling class. Capitalism co-opts observances to its own end, whenever suitable. Many Black people were thus uplifted to a national height, but only because their legacies could serve the continuation of elitist politics.

The official telling of Black history tends to be watered down and controlled. On the surface, Black History Month is a sound way to remember and celebrate the forebears of the struggle for mass liberation. But the ruling class, along with its political allies, promotes a contrived account of Black resistance that obscures the more militant histories and achievements of Black Americans. The Civil Rights Movement’s history is thereby diminished and legacies of racial injustices omitted.

Celebrations in the U.S. don’t tend to affirm people whose histories are challenging. For the most part, celebratory aspects of Black History Month are reserved for figures whose history doesn’t upset the status quo. Selective retelling of Black history plays into the hands of the oppressor’s socioeconomic and political systems upon which it is based. This ignores and leaves out the radical foundations of those it claims to represent.



Rosa Parks being booked into the Montgomery, Ala., jail for defiantly breaking segregation laws on a city bus Dec. 1, 1955.



Radical and revolutionary Black figures and agents of change are generally overlooked or diminished. Civil Rights leader W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) focused on racial uplifting, economic strength and self-sufficiency for African Americans during the early 1900s. A sociologist, historian and author, DuBois was also a Pan-Africanist and co-founder of the NAACP. He wrote the groundbreaking “Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880” and “The Souls of Black Folks.” But what’s ignored are his socialist politics and Communist Party USA membership, as well as his renouncing U.S. citizenship and self-exile to Ghana.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech is spotlighted, but not his more radical “Beyond Vietnam” speech. Rosa Parks did not just refuse to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Ala. — the full scope of her political life included fighting for global justice, especially during the U.S. war on Vietnam, along with fighting for racial, criminal and economic justice in the U.S.

The more militant histories of Black resistance and the achievements of African Americans like Malcolm X, Mabel and Robert Williams, the Black Panthers and the Deacons of Defense are also obscured by the ruling class and their political allies. These stories have been deliberately erased or co-opted when teaching U.S. history.

Defend Black history and Black struggle

The merits of Black History Month continue to be debated in the U.S. One contention places the observance as being the opposite of so-called “American values” for focusing on a specific racial group. It insists the U.S. is a “color-blind” society. Profane attacks on Black history deny past and present achievements, against all odds, of African-descendant trailblazers in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Another telling of Black history defends and speaks to the necessity of the observance due to the historical and current oppression of African Americans. Unique to the African-American experience are the nearly two-and-a-half centuries of being enslaved, followed by the legal practice of segregation and racial discrimination against Black people from 1880 to 1965, forbidding them to be in “white-only” spaces, in the South and the North, which also provided justification for killing Black people.

There’s a saying that since Black History Month is commemorated in February, it can be deduced that white history “month” expands to the rest of the year.

Movements aimed at transforming the social order have to continue to do so. It’s only when the basis of society is

drastically altered that these differing histories can supersede current principles and policies. Until that time, Black History Month must exist and be defended -- not only from flagrant racist and right-wing attacks -- but also from liberals who view tokenism and Black tolerance as the only appropriate ways of representing and remembering the Black past.

Truthful U.S. history reveals the great impact that Black Americans have had since colonial times. But this legacy must not and cannot be understood in ways that strengthen a dominant white view of the world, shown and seen mainly through that lens.

The elite appropriate and rewrite history in order to quiet dissent. The more unsavory forces of racist and reactionary politics distort and attempt to do away with the history altogether. Black history will be synonymous with U.S. history only when there’s a solution to the “race” question. But this is way off into the future — and not possible yet due to existing socioeconomic, political and cultural realities.

Black History Month must be supported and widened, and not just in February. There’s need for continued advocacy directed at understanding Black history on more radical grounds, along with wider social movements aimed at overthrowing the status quo. Black History Month won’t be necessary when the long-existing racist environment is eliminated.

Revisionist history erases and whitewashes Black history, but nevertheless that history has been and will ultimately be passed down through generations. Black people must continue to affirm their humanity, while refuting racist stories. Telling full, real and authentic stories helps fill the void left by incomplete textbooks.

The U.S. needs to come to terms with its true past. The country has not fulfilled the promises that it says it is most proud of. Black history must be fought for — and against those who seek to eliminate it through opportunistic appropriation. □



W.E.B. Du Bois (left), Nina Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson were key organizers of the 1917 march in Harlem, N.Y., against ongoing violence aimed at Black people, including the East St. Louis Race Riots, where white mobs claimed the lives of up to 250 African Americans and left nearly 6,000 fleeing from burning homes.

Atlanta

Fighting racism with the Kaeper Bowl

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Feb. 10 — When the capitalist colossus known as the Super Bowl takes over a city like it did Feb. 3 in Atlanta, it's hard to break through the nonstop hype to address the realities facing working and poor people in the neighborhoods around the Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

But when the city decided to demolish an abandoned building not far from the stadium where Fabian Williams had painted a mural of Colin Kaepernick in 2017, he and his fellow street artists and muralists decided "game on."

Kaepernick, former quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers, shook the owners of the NFL and the political establishment by "taking a knee" during the playing of the U.S. national anthem in 2016. His action was a dramatic protest of the police killing of people of color, especially Black men.

Kaepernick inspired other professional football players, as well as other athletes in many sports, to follow his example. His embrace of the Black Lives Matter movement so enraged the right wing that no National Football League team has since offered him a contract, despite his stellar career.

Williams, who had freshened up the paint on the mural for the Super Bowl crowds, happened to be



Fabian Williams’ mural of Muhammad Ali (left) and Colin Kaepernick, at Fair Street and Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard, was destroyed by a city bulldozer the day before the Super Bowl in Atlanta.

driving by the wall on Feb. 1 — only to see the city’s bulldozer destroy his work. He determined right then that multiple images of Kaepernick would appear on walls across the city by the time of the big game.

Funds were raised for paint through social media, artists volunteered their talent, and building owners gave their permission for the resistance murals.

The project was named "KaeperBowl."

By the end of the football game, at least seven more images of Colin Kaepernick decorated walls in different Atlanta neighborhoods, bringing a message of struggle against racism and injustice.

The ubiquitous Super Bowl signage is gone, but it's likely that the KaeperBowl will roll on. □

Mumia Abu-Jamal commentary

Radical politics

The following slightly edited commentary was written by political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and is posted on Prison Radio.

Feb. 6 — I'm often amused when I read, hear or see a politician criticize his opponents as “radical.”

That’s meant to isolate his opponent as somehow weird.

But, guess what?

Radicals are as common as crabgrass in U.S. history. That's because without radicals, how could the nation be born based as it was on militant opposition to British kings?

At the time, Europe was dominated by hereditary royalty.

And after the U.S. Civil War, the radicals were the Republicans, who opposed slavery and fought for Black votes, while the Democrats were the party of the Ku Klux Klan. So, radicals fought for freedom from kings and from slavery.

In 1877, Republican presidential candidate Rutherford Hayes sold out Black Republicans and Black Southerners to allow Democratic ascendancy and political autonomy. The U.S. Army left the South, and Blacks were exposed to white terrorism ... again.

Radicalism, it seems, only went so far.

In the 1960s, Blacks embarked on a radical freedom struggle, North and South. Predictably, they were again betrayed, often by Republican politicians.

Radicals like Rev. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton and thousands of others fought for Black freedom. Others fought for an end to the Vietnam War.

The point?

Radicals and revolutionaries fought for freedom from all forms of oppression.

And the last I looked, that was a good thing. □

National oppression and the struggle for socialism

By Monica Moorehead

The following is an excerpt from the second chapter of Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle.

As a Black person growing up in the South during the 1950s, i experienced a “separate but equal” society: racist segregation. As a 12-year-old living in Talladega, AL, I witnessed a white male cop going into a white-only women’s bathroom to “escort” my mother out. In 1967, i attended a majority-white high school in Virginia whose fight song happened to be the pro-slavery anthem “Dixie.”

I began to seriously question whether all white people were born racist. My questions on the origins of racism began to be answered once i met the Prisoners Solidarity committee, a mass unit of Workers World Party. My introduction to the Party would eventually begin my journey of helping to put my personal experiences within a worldwide political context.

Marxism is the only scientific tool and guide for understanding revolutionary theory and for carrying out revolutionary action. The Party opened my eyes to the fact that racism is an ideology rooted in the economic system of capitalism, and perpetuates class divisions in order to maximize profits.

Racist ideas do not originate with white workers, who are more susceptible to these poisonous ideas; they come from a predominantly white ruling class that relies on racism, sexism and homophobia to maintain the status quo. National oppression, an outgrowth of imperialism, confirms that the vast majority of Black, Latino, indigenous, asian and arab peoples are not just victims of institutionalized racism, but are members of oppressed nations that are super-exploited and super-oppressed for who they are, where they live and where they come from. These factors and others help to define their relationship to capitalism and imperialism.

Understanding the roots of national oppression means understanding that there are oppressed nations and a white oppressor nation. Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that led to the birth of the Soviet Union, helped to theoretically define the colonial question at a time

when national liberation movements began erupting in africa, asia, the Middle east, Latin America and elsewhere against the onslaught of imperialist plunder and exploitation.

Many of these liberation movements have been led by nationalists who adhere to diverse ideologies, some of them bourgeois and some of them more anti-imperialist, and then there are the movements lead by socialists and communists. Even though we have more of a political affinity for those nationalists who consider themselves revolutionary Marxists, in general we defend the leadership of genuine national liberation movements and those leaders of oppressed countries seeking some degree of independence and sovereignty. We take this principled position because imperialism has been the biggest obstacle in putting the brake on independent economic and social development for the poorer countries.

The struggle for reparations represents the unfinished revolution for bourgeois- democratic rights that have never been fully won by Black people in the United States, in africa, the caribbean and elsewhere.

The reparations demand addresses the internal colonization that Black people are still subjected to in a country like the United States, dominated by whites based on their greater numbers and various degrees of privilege. only a socialist revolution, the total expropriation of the means of producing everything in society by the multinational working class, can liberate labor from capitalist slavery. As we continue to fight for progressive reforms under capitalism, only socialism can win and guarantee

full democratic rights, including the right to housing, education, health care, jobs, food, equality and much more.

While imperialism is an economic system based on carving up the world’s resources and displacing and impoverishing hundreds of millions of people to make profits, socialism is an economic system based on an affirmative-action process of systematically eradicating all the inequalities based on the existence of classes.

The George Bushes and John Ashcrofts would not be working overtime in building more prisons, passing extreme reactionary, repressive laws like the Patriot acts I and II, attacking reproductive rights and samesex marriage, or carrying out bloody wars for empire if they were not fearful of the inevitable united upsurge of the workers and oppressed. Our attitude toward nationalism of the oppressed is not one of being on the defensive, but rather deepening our resolve to show our anti-imperialist solidarity by fighting racism and at the same time promoting our multinational, working-class, prosocialist perspective.

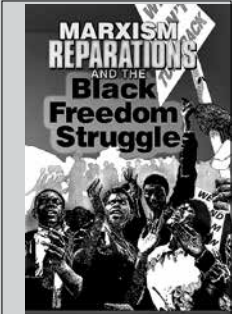
We are duty bound to support the right to self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including the right to separation. We don’t advocate separation, but defend it as a political demand to build solidarity. Revolutionary socialists and communists of all nationalities must understand that to support and defend the struggles of nationally oppressed peoples here and abroad against imperialism and colonialism is part and parcel of the struggle for worldwide socialism, including right here in the United States. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

- **Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes
- **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy
- **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** Leilani Dowell
- **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead
- **Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights** Imani Henry
- **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad
- **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal

& Much more ... Read it at www.workers.org/books/



Venezuela and revolutionary internationalism

Continued from page 7

international came from someone and someplace outside of Europe. That was historic in and of itself.

But there was a practical and immediate motive. Hugo Chávez knew—just as Maduro knows, just as anyone who is in revolutionary leadership or ranks knows—that at any time their revolutionary project may face an imperialist war of one type or another, whether it’s economic, sanctions, starvation, military attack or covert sabotage.

No one can direct the struggle in someone else’s country from the outside. But what responsibility do we have to Venezuela, from thousands of miles away? A lot! That’s internationalism!

Role of Venezuela in global struggle

Ten years after Chávez advanced the idea of a new international, the need for internationalism is more urgent today.

It is so clear that all our struggles are both separate and interdependent in the smaller world. What does globalization mean? It means that capitalism on a global basis is far more integrated that it has ever been in its entire existence. That also means that our struggles are far more interdependent than they have ever been in the history of the struggle for liberation, the class struggle, the struggle for socialism and revolution.

The imperialists are globalists. We have to be thinking as revolutionary globalists. Now is the time to understand, concretely, practically, how interdependent our struggles are all over the world.

There is a worldwide struggle against capitalism, which has never been more unpopular. There is a struggle against the rich with the Yellow Vests in France, the education workers rising up in the U.S., and the fact that Democratic presidential candidates have to even suggest taxing the 1%. There is a growing global revolt against the rich.

This bodes well for our solidarity with Venezuela. If there was ever a time for the slogan, “There are no borders in the workers’ struggle,” now is the time. But it has to become more than a slogan. We have to find a way to make this practical and decisive.

The struggle to defend the Bolivarian Revolution is the defining struggle at this

moment. For one thing, it is a 20-year rebellion against the rich which imperialists would like to crush.

This is the defining struggle, not just for the Venezuelans but on a global basis. If you really want to fight for socialism—if you want to get an idea of what a real revolutionary struggle is, with high stakes, where you are fighting imperialism and possible military intervention—get involved in this struggle.

Revolutionary potential in defending Venezuela

This struggle is a reminder that every time oppressed people try to take control of their destiny, it’s akin to a slave revolt. And those who think they are rulers forever of this world cannot allow that. They will do anything to crush it.

They are still wringing their hands and criticizing each other in the Pentagon and on Wall Street for allowing Cuba to live. In the wake of that, they decided that no other revolution will survive in what they consider to be their own “backyard.” But they can’t get away with it.

February 23 will mark the one-month anniversary of this attempted U.S. coup. We are part of a coalition that feels this is a good day to come out everywhere—in the U.S. and globally—to defend the Bolivarian Revolution.

Defending Venezuela means making a material difference in the rebellion against the rich. In the call for Feb. 23 is a demand that Wall Street make reparations for all their crimes against the Venezuelan people, oppressed people, the liberation movements and the working class of the world.

This is a new year and a new international crisis. Let’s make Feb. 23 a revolutionary example of how forces with differences and different histories can come together and demonstrate that we understand that the world has entered a new stage of development. While it may be fraught with dangers, it is also full of revolutionary potential. Let’s push to see what victories we can gain.

Long live the Bolivarian Revolution! Long live the rebirth of revolutionary internationalism—starting now! □

Whose State of the Union?

The U.S. president's annual State of the Union address to Congress has morphed from its more humble beginnings into a full-on, Hollywood-style extravaganza, broadcast on all television channels and radio stations to tens of millions of people, in which the big-business party in office tries to burnish its image with a speech full of tear-jerking anecdotes and self-congratulatory platitudes.

Trump's Feb. 5 talk — delayed by two weeks while the government was shut down over his demand for a \$5.7 billion wall on the southern border — was no exception to this tradition.

It would take more than a modest editorial to tease apart all the lies, exaggerations and threats contained in this 90-minute speech. Suffice it to say that this silver-spoon billionaire repeated, ad nauseam, his usual vicious attacks on migrants and his demagogic attempts to speak for "American workers." He tried to take credit for gains made by women and Black people — yes, roll your eyes — and of course made a big pitch to increase the already astronomical military budget.

In sum, he tried to make it appear that everything is getting better in this country for the people and that he should get all the credit for this presumed progress.

Of course, in Trump's circle things ARE getting better. There are more billionaires, and their wealth has vastly increased, while their taxes decreased. This stands in contrast to the struggle of workers, especially younger people starting their often futile search for a stable, decent-paying job, many of them burdened with immense debt for post-high-school education.

Big bright spots

Are we saying that everything about the real "State of the Union" is bad? No, there are some pretty big bright spots. Of course, they're not what Trump or Democratic Party leaders want to talk about.

Take the information recently released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics about strikes in 2018.

There were 20 major work stoppages in the U.S. — the highest since 2007. And the number of workers involved in them — 485,000 — was the most since 1986.

And this is only "major" work stoppages. It doesn't count all the smaller strikes.

According to the BLS, "Educational services and health care and social assistance industry groups accounted for over 90 percent of all workers idled in 2018.

"In 2018, the largest work stoppage by days idle was between the Arizona State Legislature and Arizona Education Association and involved 81,000 teachers and staff totaling 486,000 days of idleness. The second largest stoppage in 2018 involved the Oklahoma State Legislature and the Oklahoma Education Association accounting for 405,000 days idle. Statewide major work stoppages in educational services also occurred in West Virginia, Kentucky, Colorado, and North Carolina."

These strikes indicate the many workers today fighting back against their eroding standard of living. Many of these strikes were actually illegal especially the ones by education workers in states that don't recognize their right to strike. But the authorities had to negotiate with them and their unions without arrests because the teachers had such strong popular support.

This reflects a big change in class consciousness, on the part of both the teachers themselves and the communities they serve.

Millennials and Generation Zers

Another big shift to include in our rosy "State of the Union" report is the state of mind of the Millennials and Generation Zers, as reflected in polls taken by the Pew Research Center. Millennials were in their 20s and 30s last year. Gen Zers were between 13 and 21.

"When it comes to views on race, the two younger generations are more likely than older generations to say that blacks are treated less fairly than whites in the United States today. And they are much more likely than their elders to approve of NFL players kneeling during the national anthem as a sign of protest.

"Majorities among Gen Z and the Millennial generation say increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. is a good thing for society, while older generations are less convinced of this. And they're more likely to have a positive view of interracial and same-sex marriage than their older counterparts.

"Gen Z is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation we have seen. While Generation Z's views resemble those of Millennials in many areas, Gen Zers are distinct from Millennials and older generations. Gen Zers are more likely than Millennials to say they know someone who prefers that others use gender-neutral pronouns to refer to them."

Look out millionaires, patriarchs, slave-driving bosses and migrant bashers. Gen Z is gonna get ya! □

Liars and criminals: A U.S. gang of seven assaults Venezuela

By John Catalinotto

In the early 1960s, a group of top officials in the John Kennedy administration — known as the "whiz kids" for their alleged sterling performance at university, as industrial officers or U.S. officials — escalated Washington's war of aggression against Vietnam.

New York Times reporter David Halberstam in his 1972 book, "The Best and the Brightest" — a title he meant to be ironic — described how the whiz kids overestimated the capability of the U.S. while underestimating the Vietnamese and their leadership.

Now, nearly 60 years later, another group of U.S. top officials is leading the charge of a new reactionary crusade. No one would call them the best or brightest, even with irony.

These seven officials are waging aggression with far less cover than is usual. They have openly stated their goal: to conquer Venezuela and seize its resources, especially its oil and gold reserves, and also re-establish complete U.S. domination of the Western Hemisphere by overthrowing the governments in Cuba and Nicaragua.

Far from whiz kids, they are individuals whose main and often only qualification is their willingness to tell the most outrageous lies and commit the most heinous of crimes to achieve their reactionary and anti-people goals. They are the bottom feeders in the cesspool of imperialist officials.

These criminals include: National Security Advisor John Bolton, who constantly agitates for war against Iran, threatens the Democratic People's



Oil tanks of the national-owned Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. emblazoned with the words, "Homeland, socialism or death."

Republic of Korea with annihilation and is a perpetual warmonger.

Elliott Abrams, the special envoy overseeing policy for Venezuela, who they had to drag up from the Mariana Trench of the cesspool. Abrams' record dates from the 1980s when he armed the "contras" against Nicaragua and put the genocidal Rios Montt regime in power in Guatemala. Abrams was even convicted of lying to the U.S. Congress, only to be pardoned by President George H.W. Bush.

Senator Marco Rubio from Florida, whose personal history and beliefs coincide with political expediency to put him on the side of Cuban, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan exiles. These former oligarchs, capitalists and their hangers-on now inhabit Rubio's state.

Mike Pence, the evangelical, anti-woman, anti-LGBTQ U.S. vice president, who telephoned orders to Juan Guaidó to announce the following day, Jan. 23, that he was Venezuela's "interim president."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo — a former CIA head — and Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin also announced their intention to mobilize every Latin American puppet and European junior imperialist partner as they attempt to blockade Venezuela and steal its property.

Trump himself makes his hatred of everyone south of the U.S. border (except for his lackies) emphatic every time he tweets. One wonders if his "advisers" have convinced him that he will be welcomed in Caracas to throw

paper towels to cheering crowds, as he did in hurricane-devastated Puerto Rico.

No less dangerous for it

Any politically conscious Venezuelan or other Latin American will easily recognize this U.S. gang as enemies of their people. This gang of seven may be less skilled at carrying off an intervention, which in the end can be defeated. The gang's incompetence and congenital underestimation of the masses, however, does not automatically mean less harm to the people of Bolivarian Venezuela or to all of the Americas.

The Democratic Party leadership here, Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer, etc., who know full well the sordid political record of the Trump gang described above, nevertheless support U.S. intervention against Venezuela. (See tinyurl.com/yx9xr2o3)

All the more reason for those inside the U.S. who want to defend Venezuela from these criminals to recognize the massive distrust of the Trump administration and mobilize against U.S. intervention.

Demonstrate on the weekend of Feb. 23 in your city. Go to No War on Venezuela! (nowaronvenezuela.org) for actions. Mobilize for a national demonstration in Washington, D.C., on March 16 and another on March 30. And be ready to argue, struggle and win to stop a new calamity.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro — the real president — warned of a conflict "worse than Vietnam" if the U.S. should invade. That message must be taken seriously. □

Hard exit from EU raises stakes for workers in Britain and Ireland

By G. Dunkel

The process of Britain leaving the European Union, called Brexit, is producing a major spasm in world capitalism's current crisis.

What is yet to be decided is how Britain will leave. The choices are either "soft," which would involve maintaining some formal links, or "hard," with rigorous checks of people and goods at all border crossings and no agreement as yet on custom duties. This may have the biggest impact on the Republic of Ireland.

Role of EU

The European Union is a free trade zone. That means that goods can go from one member state to another without tariffs. It is also a single market. This allows both the free flow of capital and "the free flow of labor" for its members.

An unelected bureaucracy based in Brussels makes economic decisions that affect the entire EU. This bureaucracy serves European finance capital, especially the banks based in Germany, France and Britain.

EU rules can impose wage austerity and budget cuts, dismantle social protections and insist on deregulation — without input from the people these changes would seriously affect. This has been most obvious with its treatment of Greece over the last five years.

The British ruling class doesn't need the EU bureaucracy to impose its own austerity rules on the workers inside its territory. These have reduced the standard of living for large sectors of the working class in Britain.

On the other hand, sectors of the British ruling class undoubtedly resent Germany's dominance of the EU. But with Brexit, British capitalists will face a disruption of trade and capital flows after 40 years of integration in the EU.

It is in the interest of the European bourgeoisie to maintain the EU as a common market for two main purposes: so it can compete more effectively with U.S. imperialism and with China, and so it can increase the exploitation of European workers.

Thus, the EU bureaucracy has reason to make Britain pay for disrupting and weakening the EU, and to discourage exits by other countries.

All the major political parties in the British Parliament appear to have three factions contending inside them: "the hard leavers," "the soft leavers" and "the remainers." These contending factions have prevented the current Tory government from arriving at a position with majority support.



A 2018 protest outside Parliament in London to protect rights of EU workers post-Brexit.

In addition, the government in London rules England, Scotland, Wales and the northeast of Ireland. Scotland voted by 62 percent to remain in the EU. In Ireland's northern six counties, the vote to remain was 56 percent.

The overall vote in the 2016 referendum was just 52 percent for leaving. Right-wing politicians like Boris Johnson waged a xenophobic and racist campaign against all immigrants — as well as blaming the EU for the decline in living standards of British workers — which led to the Brexit vote.

There has been some talk about a second referendum, but this seems unlikely. Prime Minister Theresa May has repeatedly said she will have a plan by the March 29 deadline and Britain will indeed leave.

Impact on Ireland

A hard exit will create a big problem for the Republic of Ireland, which remains in the EU. Ireland has a land border with the six counties. Since the Belfast Agreement of 1998, goods and people have flowed across the border unimpeded.

According to the Jan. 15 Irish Times, there are 120 official border crossings on the eastern border of the EU, from the most northerly tip of Norway to the Black Sea in the southeast, about 3,720 miles. An official border crossing is one with immigration and customs control.

But the Irish border, which has existed only since the Republic of Ireland won its freedom in 1922, has 208 official road crossings along 310 miles.

Economists estimate the Irish economy will contract by 5 to 10 percent. Markets will be lost. Farmers will have trouble selling their products on the other side of the border. Workers in the Irish fishing industry may have to pay duty on fish caught in British waters.

Workers who live in the Republic but work in the six counties, or vice versa, may have to move or lose their jobs.

If a hard border is put in place, with soldiers, customs officers and identification checks, not only would it anger millions of Irish people who vehemently oppose British occupation. It could have other repercussions, such as the harassment and possible detention of immigrants and refugees at checkpoints. And it could pose obstacles to women traveling from the north — where abortion is outlawed — to the Irish Republic to obtain the procedure legally.

Impact on workers

Britain's economy is far more threatened by the consequences of Brexit than that in any other EU country. If May can't get a deal with the EU, projections show that the British gross domestic product would fall by 9.3 percent and housing prices by 30 percent. (New York Times, Feb. 7)

Some of the 3 million workers in England with passports from other EU member countries — especially the most skilled in health care and construction — have been leaving. Though the regulations are yet to be set, most non-British EU citizens working in England expect hassles. Since the Brexit vote, wages in the hospitality, restaurant, construction and finance sectors of the English economy where foreign workers were frequently hired — have been increasing for new hires.

Prime Minister May has promised that any worker currently in England will be allowed to stay. However, members of the "hard leavers" faction in the Conservative Party have challenged her on this point. A report in the Sept. 19 Guardian claimed that 7 out of 10 non-British EU workers would lose their right to work in Britain after Brexit.

Trade disruptions will have negative consequences in the various European countries that are major partners of Great Britain. A drop in remittances from workers who must leave Britain will harm the economies especially of the eastern European countries which have had many citizens working there.

For example, the million Polish workers in Britain sent home over \$1 billion in 2017. Eight percent of Lithuania's workers live in England. Workers even from France and Germany sent home a bit more than Polish workers.

It is unclear what will happen to the approximately 1 million British workers in continental Europe.

Kathy Durkin also contributed to this article.

Activists in Spain accused of 'terrorism' say: 'Solidarity is legitimate'

The following article was published in izquierdadiario.es. Translation by WW Managing Editor John Catalinotto.

Feb. 5 — Today members of the Red Network, Ángeles Maestro, María Barriuso and Beatriz Torre, testified before the Spanish Audiencia Nacional [special court] after being accused of "financing terrorism" when they showed solidarity with the cause of the Palestinian people in 2014 and 2015.

Maestro said that "solidarity is legitimate and only by exercising it can we keep it legitimate."

After appearing around 11 a.m. before Justice Manuel García Castellón of the Audiencia Nacional, the three accused activists made a statement to the press.

Maestro, the current leader of Red Network, a former IU (United Left) deputy in the National Congress elected in 1989 (and re-elected in 1993 and 1996), was greeted with applause by her comrades, as well as by the IU City Council member in Madrid, Carlos Sanchez Mato.

Maestro said she has a "clear conscience" and is confident that in the end



Ángeles Maestro

the charges against her and the two other Red Network activists will be dropped.

Maestro, Barriuso and Torre were accused of the alleged crime of "financing terrorism." In mid-2014 and late 2015 they promoted the collection of economic solidarity aid to send to the Palestinian people, following the deaths, injuries and damages caused by Israel's military offensive against the Gaza Strip known as "Operation Protective Edge."

The complaint was filed by the pro-Israel association, Law Force Project Spain, and the Jewish Cultural Association of Ibiza, which has since withdrawn from the proceedings. A U.S. lawyer is pursuing the accusation.

In 2014, the Red Network raised a total

of 5,300 euros in a campaign on its website. It handed this sum to Palestinian activist Leila Khaled, who was in Spain at the invitation of a Barcelona City Council-sponsored literary fair. One year later, after another Israeli incursion into Gaza, the Red Network collected 3,085 euros in the same way and gave this to representatives of the Palestinian National Authority in Spain.

The basis for the accusation is Khaled's membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an organization included in the European Union's list of terrorist groups.

Maestro declared before the judge of the Audiencia Nacional that she had no knowledge that the Palestinian activist was part of the PFLP or that this organization was listed as a "terrorist group" when she promoted the collection of funds for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

"The indictment focused on who we gave the money to, but Palestine is not an easy place to send money by bank transfer. In 2014 Leila Khaled, the most important living symbol or icon of the Palestinian people, was here and we gave it to her,"

Maestro explained to the media.

"I was not aware that she was a leader of the PFLP because that is not what she is famous for," said Maestro. "She symbolizes in herself the struggle of the Palestinian people, beyond whether she is part of an organization or not. And I absolutely did not know that the Popular Front was on a European list of terrorist organizations since 2002 because [PFLP] representatives move freely."

Maestro's defense has offered the judge valid proof that the final destination of those funds was health institutions, although she trusts that this will be filed in an official manner. Her defense will urge dismissal of all charges.

"It's all a little unusual, to be honest. Who is the terrorist, the one who invades a country or the one who tries to resist?" said Maestro, the former deputy.

For Nines, as she is popularly known, "solidarity is legitimate" and "to legitimize solidarity means to do it, to exercise it, not to have it hung like a plaque on a wall."

Ángeles Maestro has contributed articles to Workers World, the latest one on Jan. 3. (tinyurl.com/yyzevt9r)



FOTO: VENEZUELA ANALYSIS

Caracas, 23 de enero

Carta abierta al pueblo estadounidense

Por Nicolás Maduro Moros*

Si algo sé es de pueblos, porque tal como ustedes, soy un hombre de pueblo. Nací y crecí en un barrio de Caracas, me forjé al calor de las luchas populares y sindicales en una Venezuela sumida en la exclusión y la desigualdad, no soy un magnate, soy un trabajador de razón y de corazón, que hoy tengo el privilegio de presidir la nueva Venezuela arraigada en un modelo de desarrollo inclusivo e igualdad social que forjó el Comandante Hugo Chávez desde 1998, inspirado en el legado bolivariano.

Vivimos hoy un trance histórico, corren días que definirán el futuro de nuestros países entre la guerra y la paz.

Le digo al pueblo de Estados Unidos: Vuestros representantes de Washington quieren traer a sus fronteras el mismo odio que sembraron en Vietnam, quieren invadir e intervenir Venezuela, ellos dicen, como lo dijeron entonces, en nombre de la democracia y la libertad, pero no es así.

La historia de la usurpación del poder en Venezuela es tan falsa como las armas de destrucción masiva en Irak. Es un caso falso, pero que puede tener consecuencias dramáticas para nuestra región entera.

Venezuela es un país que, por obra de su Constitución de 1999, ha expandido ampliamente la democracia participativa y protagónica del pueblo y que de forma inédita es uno de los países con mayor número de procesos electorales del mundo en los últimos 20 años.

Podrá no gustarles nuestra ideología, nuestro aspecto, pero existimos y somos millones.

Dirijo estas palabras al pueblo de los Estados Unidos con la firma de millones de venezolanos para alertarlos de la gravedad y peligrosidad que pretenden unos sectores en la Casa Blanca de invadir Venezuela, con consecuencias impredecibles para mi Patria y para toda la región americana.

El presidente Donald Trump pretende además perturbar nobles iniciativas de diálogo impulsadas por Uruguay, México, con el apoyo de Caricom (Comunidad del Caribe), para una solución pacífica y dialogada a favor de Venezuela.

Sabemos que por el bien de Venezuela tenemos que sentarnos y dialogar, porque negarse a dialogar es elegir la fuerza como camino. Tengamos presente las palabras de John F. Kennedy cuando dijo "nunca negociemos por miedo, pero nunca tengamos miedo de negociar".

¿Tendrán miedo a la verdad los que no

quieren dialogar?, nos preguntamos.

La intolerancia política hacia el modelo bolivariano, venezolano y las apetencias por nuestros inmensos recursos petroleros, minerales y otras grandes riquezas han impulsado una coalición internacional encabezada por el gobierno imperialista de los Estados Unidos, para cometer la grave locura de agredir militarmente a Venezuela bajo la falsa excusa de una crisis humanitaria inexistente.

El pueblo de Venezuela ha sufrido dolorosamente heridas sociales causadas por un criminal bloqueo comercial y financiero, que ha sido agravado por el despojo y robo de nuestros recursos financieros y activos en países alineados con esta demencial embestida.

Sin embargo, gracias a un novedoso sistema de protección social, de atención a sectores más vulnerables, con orgullo seguimos siendo un país con índice de desarrollo humano alto y la menor desigualdad de América Latina.

El pueblo estadounidense debe saber que

esta compleja agresión multiforme se ejecuta con total impunidad y en franca violación a la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, que expresamente proscribía la amenaza o el uso de la fuerza, entre otros principios y propósitos en aras de la paz y las relaciones de amistad entre las naciones.

Queremos seguir siendo socios comerciales del pueblo de Estados Unidos, como lo hemos sido a lo largo de nuestra historia, sus políticos en Washington, en cambio, están dispuestos a enviar a sus hijos a morir en una guerra absurda, en lugar de respetar el derecho sagrado del pueblo venezolano a la autodeterminación y al resguardo de su soberanía. Como ustedes, pueblo estadounidense, los venezolanos y las venezolanas somos patriotas y defenderemos lo nuestro con todos los trozos de nuestra alma.


Hoy Venezuela está unida en un solo clamor: exigimos el cese de la agresión que busca asfixiar nuestra economía y sofocar socialmente a nuestro pueblo. Así como, el cese de las graves y peligrosas amenazas de intervención militar contra Venezuela.

Apelamos al alma buena de la sociedad estadounidense, víctimas de sus propios gobernantes, para que se unan a nuestro llamado por la paz. Seamos un solo pueblo contra el belicismo y la guerra.

¡Qué vivan los pueblos de América!

(*) Nicolás Maduro Moros
Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela
8 de febrero de 2019

No a la guerra de EE.UU. contra Venezuela!



Acciones nacionales y internacionales

sábado,

del 23 de febrero

NoWaronVenezuela.org

Detrás de la llamada ‘crisis humanitaria’ en Venezuela

Por Samuel Ordóñez

10 de febrero - Durante dos semanas y media, millones de venezolanas/os a lo largo del país se han movilizado para mostrar su apoyo al gobierno encabezado por Nicolás Maduro Moros. Las masas venezolanas han enviado un mensaje claro: la Revolución Bolivariana vive, está fuerte, y no se va a rendir ante las amenazas estadounidenses.

El día 23 de enero, el opositor Juan Guaidó, diputado y presidente de la Asamblea Nacional en desacato de la orden del Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, se auto juramentó como presidente de la República Bolivariana. Su programa económico fue dictado por el imperialismo estadounidense: privatizar los recursos, recortar las misiones sociales, y todo lo que pida el capital extranjero para operar en el país.

La administración de Donald Trump declaró que enviará “ayuda humanitaria,” y al día siguiente Guaidó los invitó a traerla, diciendo que vendría por Colombia, Brasil, y una isla caribeña. El gobierno legítimo - y único - del país sin embargo, reiteró que no dejaría entrar a EUA en su territorio.

El "gobierno" virtual de Guaidó, cuando llama a su base a movilizarse, puede producir unos miles de personas, principalmente en los barrios más ricos del país. Sin embargo, es al ejército o a los gringos que Guaidó le pide que le otorguen el poder. Con muy pocas excepciones, la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana ha declarado que protegerá al gobierno real – el del

presidente Maduro - a pesar de las nuevas sanciones estadounidenses aplicadas a los generales.

Como respuesta a las amenazas de una invasión estadounidense, el gobierno bolivariano ha empezado a distribuir armas a la milicias comunales.

La ‘crisis humanitaria’ inventada

Para justificar el golpe de estado que busca asestar, el gobierno de EUA dice que hay una crisis humanitaria en el país resultante de las políticas del gobierno bolivariano. Sus amenazas más recientes aparecen en la forma de obligar la entrada de ayuda humanitaria.

Pero en realidad, los problemas económicos de Venezuela son el resultado de las acciones desestabilizadoras de EUA y sus aliados.

En el 2014, Arabia Saudita usó su posición como presidente de la OPEC para multiplicar la producción del petróleo, causando la caída del precio por barril. El petróleo es la industria principal de Venezuela, y tiene las mayores reservas certificadas de crudo. La caída de los precios dañó gravemente la economía venezolana.

Sumada a la crisis del petróleo son las sanciones económicas aplicadas por Barack Obama en 2015 y expandidas por Donald Trump. Las sanciones le roban miles de millones de dólares a Venezuela anualmente, y dificultan la importación de muchos productos, especialmente las medicinas.

Entre las sanciones, los ataques contra la

moneda venezolana, y el sabotaje interno de los empresarios importadores, EUA y sus aliados en Venezuela han creado una guerra económica durante años.

Pero calificar esa situación como una crisis humanitaria es ignorar las medidas que ha tomado la Revolución Bolivariana para aliviar los ataques económicos. Entre las muchas misiones sociales, existen más de 32.000 comités locales de abastecimiento y producción (CLAP) que producen y distribuyen comidas básicas como arroz, lentejas, frijoles, atún, aceite, harina de maíz, azúcar, y leche a precios subsidiados. Once mil de éstos CLAPs también están produciendo productos higiénicos.

En 20 años, el proceso bolivariano mediante las muchas misiones sociales, ha erradicado el analfabetismo, abierto cientos de universidades, y construido más de 2,5 mil millones de casas subsidiadas desde el 2011.

Un ejemplo idóneo de crisis humanitaria sería el llamado “Caracazo,” cuyo 30º aniversario es el 27 de febrero de 2019. En éste se sublevaron los habitantes de Caracas a causa del hambre y la propuesta de reformas neoliberales. El mismo Hugo Chávez se hizo famoso rebelándose contra el gobierno que reprimió a las masas durante este levantamiento. En verdad el Caracazo inició la lucha popular de la Revolución Bolivariana.

Solidaridad global con Venezuela

Desde el inicio del golpe de estado yanqui ha habido cientos de manifestaciones en todo el mundo apoyando a la

Revolución Bolivariana. El mismo día en que Guaidó se autoproclamó, llegaron activistas a la casa blanca para denunciar el golpe.

En los días siguientes se produjeron manifestaciones en ciudades como Nueva York, Miami, Filadelfia, Boston, San Francisco, Houston, Denver, Seattle, y Vancouver. Las manifestaciones han seguido hasta ahora, y se planean más manifestaciones en varias ciudades el 23 de febrero, y dos manifestaciones en Washington DC, los días 16 y 30 de marzo.

En Canadá, la Unión de Trabajadores Públicos (CUPE) emitió una declaración de apoyo al presidente Maduro. El Congreso de Trabajadores de Canadá (CLC), a la que pertenece CUPE, también rechazó la injerencia y llamó al diálogo.

En varias ciudades europeas, particularmente en Madrid, el pueblo ha salido en contra del golpe de estado. En Francia, algunos integrantes de la movilización de los chalecos amarillos el día 10 de febrero llevaban banderas venezolanas, o expresaron su apoyo en la embajada de París (tinyurl.com/y4k88f82).

Los gobiernos de Rusia, China, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, México, Sudáfrica, India, Italia, Nueva Zelandia, y casi todos los gobiernos africanos siguen reconociendo a Nicolás Maduro como el presidente legítimo. Además de eso, EUA y sus aliados intentaron avanzar resoluciones en la ONU y la Organización de Estados Americanos que reconocerían a Guaidó, pero no alcanzaron los votos suficientes. □